

appears then, that our whole social fabric is based upon and sustained by slave labor. There is scarcely an occupation of our people, whether mechanical, manufacturing, mercantile, or professional, that does not mainly depend upon it for a support. Without it, not a railroad could be built, and of those already constructed there would not exist the means of preventing their going to decay. Upon this labor rests the public credit, and without it the State could not procure a dollar in the market, though for the most useful purpose, because she would be wholly unable to pay the interest on the public debt already contracted. In a word, the social and material prosperity of our people and their means of living, greatly depend upon this species of labor. Its loss, with us, could never be fully supplied, for the most productive portion of our territory would not and could not be cultivated by the white race.

In view of these facts, it is clearly the part of a prudent legislation, to avoid carefully, every measure that would tend to the expulsion of this species of labor from the State. Already there exists a heavy drain upon it, in consequence of the greater profits resulting from its employment in the more southern States.

That the repeal of the clause of the constitution in question and the consequences that would inevitably flow from that act, would add another and a powerful influence to those already existing to expel slaves from the State, does not, to my mind, admit of a doubt.

Furthermore, the constitution as it exists, is consistent with itself. All free men have the right of voting for members of both branches of the Legislature, and all are required to pay a poll tax towards the support of the government. Were this tax repealed, there would exist that anomaly in free government, of the power of imposing taxes resting with one portion of our people, while the duty of paying them would remain to the other. Considered from this point of view, this feature of our constitution, which is sought to be